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COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM SANITIZED COPY

DOI JUNE - NOVEMBER 1969

SUBJECT DOWNING OF AN AMERICAN PLANE OVER LONG TOAN DISTRICT, VINH BINH PROVINCE, IN 1969

ACQ

SOURCE

1. ON 13 AUGUST 1971, A FORMER VIET CONG (VC) VILLAGE-LEVEL CADRE STATED THAT AN OBSERVATION PLANE CARRYING TWO AMERICANS WAS SHOT DOWN BY THE VC 2ND BATTALION ON THE EDGE OF CON LOI HAMLET, PROBABLY IN EARLY JULY 1969. AT THAT TIME, THIS FORMER VC CADRE AND 48 OTHER CADRES WERE ATTENDING A THREE-MONTH COUNTERINTELLIGENCE COURSE IN THE VC SECURE AREA OF CON LOI HAMLET (XB5455), LONG VILLAGE, LONG TOAN DISTRICT, VINH BINH PROVINCE. SANITIZED COPY

2. THE AIRCRAFT WAS PAINTED GRAY AND HAD SQUARE-TIPPED WINGS. ONE OF THE TWO AMERICANS, A CAPTAIN, HAD BEEN SHOT THROUGH THE LEFT ARM AND THE CHEST AND WAS DEAD WHEN THE VC REACHED THE CRASH SITE. THE OTHER, A MAJOR, WAS ALIVE AND HOLDING A MAP IN HIS HAND. HE WAS ESCORTED BY LY THANH K Y, ALIAS BAY T I N H, AND FOUR GUERRILLAS TO THE SITE OF THE TRAINING CLASS AND WAS PARADED IN FRONT OF THE STUDENTS. BAY TINH, SECRETARY OF THE TRA CU DISTRICT COMMITTEE, PULLED A .45 CALIBER PISTOL AND POINTED IT AT THE AMERICAN, THREATENING HIM. THE MAJOR RESPONDED BY TEARING OPEN HIS SHIRT AND DARING BAY TINH TO SHOOT HIM. THE STUDENTS PREVAILED UPON BAY TINH NOT TO KILL THE PRISONER.

3. AFTER ABOUT 30 MINUTES THE PRISONER WROTE A NOTE, THE CONTENTS OF WHICH WERE NOT DISCLOSED TO THE STUDENTS, AND GAVE IT TO ONE OF THE GUARDS WHO GAVE IT TO BA O A I, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE VC TRA VINH (GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) VINH BINH AND PART OF VINH LONG) PROVINCE COMMITTEE. ABOUT TWO HOURS LATER BA OAI ORDERED LE VAN C H I E N, VC VILLAGE UNIT LEADER, TO TAKE THE PRISONER AWAY AND HE WAS ESCORTED TO AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION. [redacted] BA OAI, TRUE NAME TRAN L A I, AND LY THANH KY WERE BOTH KILLED DURING [illegible] MILITARY OPERATIONS IN 1979.

4. TWO DAYS AFTER THE PLANE WAS DOWNED MANY HELICOPTERS, POSSIBLY A DOZEN, REPEATEDLY OVERFLEW THE AREA OF CON LOI HAMLET. ON THE FOURTH DAY AFTER THE PLANE WAS DOWNED, THE VC INVITED THE RESIDENTS OF CON LOI AND ADJACENT HAMLETS TO A CELEBRATION HONORING THE VC SOLDIERS WHO SHOT DOWN THE AIRCRAFT. FOUR OR FIVE RESIDENTS WENT TO OBSERVE THE BURIAL SITE OF THE AMERICAN WHO HAD BEEN KILLED. THE GRAVE WAS IN CON LOI HAMLET, ABOUT 600 METERS FROM THE SEASHORE AND 1,000 METERS SOUTH OF THE RIVER IN VINH LOI. THE VINH LOI RIVER DOES NOT APPEAR ON THE U.S. ARMY ENGINEERS MAP 1:100:000, SHEET 7228, SERIES L501. IT IS POSSIBLE THE REFERENCE IS TO THE RACH CON LOI WHICH IS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA.

5. ON 8 AUGUST 1971, A FORMER RESIDENT OF CON LOI HAMLET, WHO ALSO ATTENDED THE CELEBRATION HONORING THE VC

SOLDIERS WHO SHOT THE PLANE DOWN, SAID THE BODY OF AN AMERICAN WAS BURIED IN CON LOI HAMLET. HE SAID ONE AMERICAN HAD SURVIVED THE CRASH.

6. [redacted] THE JOINT PERSONNEL RECOVERY CENTER (JPRC) LISTS ONLY ONE OBSERVATION PLANE DOWN IN THIS AREA. IT WAS SHOT DOWN ON 15 NOVEMBER 1969 OVER LOAN TOAN DISTRICT, VINH BINH PROVINCE, AT AR730700.

7. FIELD DISSEM: STATE, USMACV, USAID, CORDS, DIA/USCPAO (MR. LINCOLN ONLY) 7TH AIR FORCE USARV AVCRV 525TH MI GP 102ND FAS OSI CINCPAC PACFLT PACAF ARPAC [redacted]